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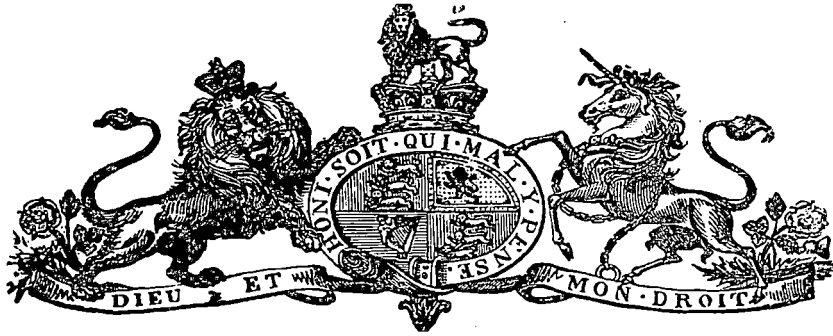
1889.

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

RAGGED SCHOOL ASSOCIATION:

LETTER FROM CHAIRMAN.

Laid upon the Table by the Treasurer, and ordered by the House of Assembly to
be printed, October 18, 1889.



Hobart, 16th October, 1889.

SIR,

BEFORE entering upon the merits of your letter dated 11th October, we feel that we have reason to complain of the want of courtesy and consideration manifested by the Government in the matter referred to, particularly as the present head of the Government is President of the Association, and is also a trustee of one of the properties; who has, in years past, not only publicly advocated the cause of the Association, but has materially helped it by his means.

After 35 years of existence we can fearlessly, yet with thankfulness, state that much effective work has been accomplished, hundreds of children having been raised to positions of usefulness in the community, and much evil prevented. It was most interesting and encouraging to hear it stated at our last annual meeting that out of the 400 children on the books of the Association, there was at that time only one boy an inmate of the Training School.

After thus endeavouring faithfully, though voluntarily, to help the State and the public, we, with the 30 ladies associated with us, now find that we are summarily dismissed as being no longer required. Not a word of conference has passed, or any other intimation than the discontinuance of the small subsidy which the State has thus far contributed, and which we should have known nothing about had not our valued colleague, the Hon. W. H. Burgess, in his place in Parliament, noticed the omission of the amount from the Estimates.

As to the reasons assigned by you for the course now proposed by the Government,—

1st. "Because it is undesirable to perpetuate in this city an Institution bearing such a name as carries with it," &c.

We submit that, nevertheless, such a class does exist, as many of us can substantiate from personal acquaintance, and a class which only such an Institution as this can reach. If the name is objectionable or offensive, by all means let it be altered; and it was thought over and discussed time after time by this Committee, but no satisfactory conclusion could be arrived at, as it was thought that such a name should be attached as would tend to deter unsuitable persons from taking advantage of the benefits of the Institution. And there have been frequent purgings of the schools to keep them free of those children whose parents, it was thought, were able to pay.

2nd. "Because it is undesirable to appear to admit," &c.

Whether the Government is pleased to admit the necessity or not, *there is a necessity*, which we have already stated we are personally acquainted with, and which is corroborated by the announcement by the Benevolent Society "that 400 children come week by week for their own and their parents' dole."

3rd. "Because it is undesirable that the State should provide for the ordinary education," &c.

We have already stated that it is our experience that the State schools cannot possibly reach the class of children educated in the Ragged Schools. And as the education imparted has already been proved to be effective, and is now doing a vast amount of good, is it desirable, for the sake of mere sentiment, to sweep it all away?

4th. "Because it is undesirable that any lower or other standard of instruction," &c.

The standard of instruction is the same as that imparted in the State schools, and the children are regularly inspected and examined by the State School Inspector.

We feel that it is impossible for us at so short a notice to reply to the several propositions made by you, involving, as they do, such important and radical changes in the constitution of the Association.

We beg that you will give this letter the same publicity that was given to your own.

On behalf of the Committee,

JOSEPH BENSON MATHER, *Chairman.*

To the Hon. the Minister of Education, Hobart.